



Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Social Services

Office of Newcomer Services

**Virginia State Refugee Coordinator Guidance Letter
(ONS/SRC)**

ONS/SRC Guidance Letter

Number 13 - 01


Date: February 1, 2013

☐ ACTION ITEM

☒ INFORMATIONAL ITEM

Subject: Changes to Refugee Medical Screening Requirements

To: ONS Resettlement Provider Directors

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Virginia State Refugee Coordinator

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Effective February 1, 2013, the Virginia Department of Health is implementing new refugee medical screening requirements. The local health districts will follow these new guidelines for all refugees and refugee-eligible populations who receive an initial refugee medical screening on or after February 1.

Background: The federal Office of Refugee Resettlement issued revised Medical Screening Guidelines on July 24, 2012 with an implementation date of October 1. These guidelines create a minimum standard of care for conducting medical screenings nationwide. ORR also provided a tool for states to use in assessing the 'reasonableness' of unit costs for the new medical screening activities. These new guidelines replace federal screening requirements established in 1995. Medical professionals conducting medical screenings have been assisted since that time by a series of subject-based guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

ORR provided states with a checklist of medical screening activities representing the minimum standard of care. Both the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the State Refugee Coordinator's office welcomed this guidance and the standardization of screenings nationwide; however, the implementation required extensive research and data system changes. Revising processes that have been in place for 16 years is complex. VDH determined the October 1 implementation date did not allow Virginia sufficient time to compare its current screening protocols to the new protocols; to develop new screening tools; to revise its billing and data collections systems; and to train local health district staff, which is the reason for the February 1 implementation date.

New Guidelines: ORR's new guidelines were developed in collaboration with the CDC Division of Global Migration and Quarantine. The cost reimbursement tool is based on

collaboration with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) Financial Management Group and the Center for Medicare Management. The goal of refugee medical screening remains the same: to promote refugee health while safeguarding public health and fiscal responsibility.

VDH has accomplished a great deal in a short time. VDH will be assessing implementation to determine if adjustments to new processes are needed.

The State Refugee Coordinator's (SRC) Office has and will continue to collaborate closely with the VDH on the implementation of the new screening guidelines. Both VDH and the SRCs office will be monitoring implementation at the local level to assure that initial medical screenings are not delayed due to the changes in processes at the local health districts.